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General Assembly

Official Records

Disarmament Commission

360th meeting

Friday, 22 April 2016, 3 p.m.

New York

Chair: Mr. Tevi .....(Vanuatu)

In the absence of the Chair, Mr. Samvelian (Armenia), Vice-Chair, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.

Agenda item 6 (*continued*)

Report of the Disarmament Commission to the General Assembly at its seventy-first session

The Acting Chair: The Commission will now proceed to adopt the reports of the subsidiary bodies under agenda items 4 and 5, as well as the draft report of the Commission, contained in documents A/CN.10/2016/L.1, A/CN.10/2016/L.2 and A/CN.10/2016/L.3, which have been circulated. Thereafter, the Commission will hear concluding statements by delegations.

To start the process of the consideration and adoption of the reports of the subsidiary bodies on individual agenda items, I shall first call on the Chairs of each Working Group to introduce their respective reports.

I now give the floor to the Chair of the Working Group I on agenda item 4, "Recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons", His Excellency Ambassador Barlybay Sadykov, Deputy Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan, to introduce the report of his Working Group, as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.2.

Mr. Sadykov (Kazakhstan), Chair of Working Group I: I would like to convey our sincere appreciation to His Excellency Ambassador Tevi, Permanent Representative of Vanuatu, for steering the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) this year and to you, Sir, as well. The work of the UNDC would not be possible without the support received from the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the unfailing service rendered by the Secretariat.

It has been Kazakhstan's great honour to chair Working Group I, on recommendations for achieving the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We thank the Commission for the confidence and trust it has placed in us, and we have striven to fulfil that trust most sincerely and to the best of our abilities. It has not been at all easy, and we thank the Commission for its understanding and goodwill. As a Group, we all have been exemplary in terms of our respect for and understanding of others' points of view, despite differing standpoints. The Group has tried to present constructive and reconciliatory proposals. For this true engagement, I would like to pay tribute to all of them for their own hard work and solidarity with the Chair.

We held a total of 12 meetings from 6 to 20 April. At the first and second meetings, delegations exchanged views and made various proposals on the Chair's non-paper and the Chair's discussion paper on approaches for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, dated 23 April 2015, which was not reviewed in 2015. There was an exchange of views and proposals in the first four meetings. At the meeting on 12 April, the Chair introduced his revised non-paper, dated 11 April 2016. Four meetings were similarly

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utilized to resolve and exchange views and for the submission of various proposals. A second revision of the non-paper was issued on 17 April, which was met with great satisfaction as a document with which we could move forward. Therefore, on 18 April, and subsequently on 20 April, we conducted a review of the entire document.

Following discussions of the Group, the Chair decided to issue the Chair's non-paper, dated 17 April 2016, under his own responsibility and without prejudice to the position of any delegation, as A/CN.10/2016/WG.1/CRP.1, which in his view could form the basis for further discussions during the intersessional period and as the 2017 substantive session of the Commission.

We would like to acknowledge, with thanks, the working papers submitted by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the States members of the League of Arab States, the representative of Australia on behalf of 26 countries, the representative of Japan on behalf of the Group of 17, and the representative of Canada, which will be issued soon.

At its 12th meeting, on 20 April, the Working Group considered and adopted by consensus its report on agenda item 4. It also decided to make available the documents mentioned in paragraph 10 of its report to the 2017 substantive session of the Commission. I would like to express the feeling that there was a sense of a positive outcome to the deliberations. Despite the differences on some critical issues, we see an effort towards bridge-building or the desire to bring the various positions closer together.

I wish to ensure all delegations that the Chair will convene a number of informal consultations during the intersessional period. An invitation will be issued to all delegations to participate in the process. We thank all delegations for their proposals, substantive and linguistic, on the text dated 17 April, which will serve as the basis for intersessional consultations. We urge delegations to submit their written proposals by Wednesday, 27 April. These will be combined and disseminated among the delegations.

We end the UNDC session of 2016 with a reasonable degree of confidence and hope. Yes, there are contradictory views, but there is every reason to believe that we can move forward towards our mandate. Once again, Kazakhstan thanks everyone and pledges, for its part, to do its very best to work unfailingly for the task that the Commission has entrusted to it.

The Acting Chair: There being no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group I on agenda item 4, as contained in A/CN.10/2016/L.2.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chair: The Commission will move on to the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.3. I give the floor to the Chair of Working Group II to introduce the report of the Working Group.

Mr. El Oumni (Morocco), Chair of Working Group II: I have the honour to introduce the report of Working Group II. At the outset, I would like to thank the members of the United Nations Disarmament Commission for the trust vested in me to chair the deliberations of the Working Group.

Working Group II, which dealt with agenda item 5, entitled "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons", held 12 meetings between 5 and 21 April. The Working Group started its deliberations on the basis of the prior Chair's paper (A/CN.10/2015/CRP.1/WGII/Rev.2), and following a complete reading of these texts, I prepared the new paper, taking into account our deliberations and delegations' proposals, which was issued under my own responsibility and without prejudice to the positions of delegations.

I listened carefully to delegations expressing their views, making proposals and raising issues of importance to them, and did the best I could to come up with solutions and comprise formulations, meeting to the extent possible the concerns of all delegations. For that purpose, I took note of oral and written inputs and reflected them in compilations circulated for information and in order to facilitate our deliberations. At each stage, I have tried to identify areas of common understanding, as well as issues requiring further deliberations. I think that we have achieved good progress.

With the agreement of the Commission, I will make good use of the intersessional period in order to narrow the gaps and find compromise solutions and to facilitate a consensus in the next substantive session of

the Commission. To that end, I know I can continue counting on the cooperation of all Member States.

I would like very particularly to thank the Chair of the Commission for his support and for his tireless efforts to build consensus among delegations. I should also like to thank specifically the Secretary of our Working Group, Ms. Christa Giles, and her team and Mr. Hideki Matsuno of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their assistance. My appreciation goes also to the interpreters for their assistance.

I should also particularly like to express my gratitude to delegations for their contributions. I believe it was a very useful and substantive discussion with an active participation on the part of all and will, I hope, form a good foundation for the work of our final use of the United Nations Disarmament Commission cycle in 2017. I am grateful to them and to the Chair of the Commission. I very much hope that the Disarmament Commission will be able to make further progress on the issue of confidence-building measures as there is so much agreement in so many areas and consensus would seem to be within our grasp. I will spare no effort to break the cycle of failures and I know I can count on all Member States.

The Acting Chair: There being no comments on the report of Working Group II, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the report of Working Group II, on agenda item 5, as contained in A/CN.10/2016/L.3.

It was so decided.

The Acting Chair: The Commission having adopted all the reports of its subsidiary bodies, I would like to thank the Chairs of the two Working Groups for their tireless efforts and dedication. The Commission is deeply indebted to them for their able leadership in guiding the deliberations on these very complex issues.

We shall now begin our consideration of the draft report of the Disarmament Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.1. I have the pleasure of giving the floor to the Vice-Chair of the Commission, Mr. Tomasz Tokarski of Poland, to introduce the draft report of the Commission.

Mr. Tokarski (Poland), Vice-Chair of the Commission: It is my honour to introduce to the Disarmament Commission the draft report of the Commission, as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.1.

The draft report consists of four chapters: "Introduction", "Organization and work of the 2015 substantive session", "Documentation", and "Conclusions and recommendations". As is customary, the final report is a factual description of the Commission's work and proceedings during the session. The substantive part comprises the two reports of the Working Groups, which were just adopted by the Commission and which are part of the present report. The Working Groups have not yet reached agreement on concrete recommendations.

This year, the Commission continued to work under the agenda adopted for the current cycle. Given the Commission's deliberative mandate, submitted oral and written proposals contributed to the objectives of the Groups. I was privileged to observe the tireless efforts of the Chairs of the two Working Groups and of the delegations to address pertinent issues on the substantive agenda items and engage in in-depth discussions with a view to finding common grounds thereof. I sensed that the deliberations and negotiations helped us to clarify positions, but yet again consensus seemed elusive. Consequently, the Working Groups have not yet reached agreement on concrete recommendations. However, I am hopeful that the last year of the cycle will still provide us with the opportunity to achieve that objective, if Member States exercise flexibility and demonstrate their resolve to reconcile their differences.

I wish to take this opportunity to say that it has been a great honour to serve as Vice-Chair of this Commission at this session, and particularly to work under the able leadership of our Chair, Ambassador Odo Tevi.

Finally, allow me to extend my gratitude to Mr. Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the counsel and support that his Office provided to the Bureau and Member States. Let me also express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Catherine Pollard, Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management, for the excellent organization and servicing of the Commission's meetings and, last but not least, to all the interpreters for making it possible for us to understand each other.

I wish to commend all members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts and kind assistance. With these brief remarks, I recommend that the Commission adopt the draft report, as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.1.

The Acting Chair: We shall now consider the draft report of the Commission. We will consider the document chapter by chapter.

If there are no comments on paragraph 1, "Introduction", I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt paragraph 1.

Paragraph 1 was adopted.

The Acting Chair: Are there any comments on chapter II?

I give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Eloumni (Morocco): I call attention to the correct spelling of my name. My last name is actually "Eloumni", which is one word with a capital "E".

The Acting Chair: That is duly noted. If there are no further comments on chapter II, entitled "Organization and work of the 2016 substantive session", paragraphs 2 to 12, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt paragraphs 2 to 12.

Paragraphs 2 to 12 were adopted.

The Acting Chair: We turn now to chapter III, "Documentation", paragraphs 13 and 14. If there are no comments, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt chapter III, paragraphs 13 and 14.

Paragraphs 13 and 14 were adopted.

The Acting Chair: If there are no comments on chapter IV, entitled "Conclusions and recommendations", paragraphs 15 to 18, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt paragraphs 15 to 18.

Paragraphs 15 to 18 were adopted.

The Acting Chair: May I take it that it is the wish of the Commission, having adopted all paragraphs of the draft report, to adopt the draft report of the Commission as a whole, as contained in document A/CN.10/2016/L.1?

The draft report was adopted.

The Acting Chair: Having adopted the report of the Commission, on behalf of the Chair of the Commission I would like to read out his closing remarks.

> "As I noted during my opening remarks three weeks ago, the Disarmament Commission conducted its deliberations against the backdrop of a challenging security environment this year. Nevertheless, I wish to strike a more positive tone on this occasion. I take note of the separate yet significant discussions occurring around us right here at the United Nations. This week, the General Assembly held a special session on the world drug problem, setting an important milestone in international cooperation to address this matter. Today, the United Nations is hosting a high-level event for the signing of the landmark Paris Climate Change Agreement.
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> "I believe it is important to remember that our work on disarmament matters is not done in isolation, and that progress made in this Commission is progress towards a more peaceful and secure world. I am heartened by the positive and constructive work that has taken place in the Commission over the past three weeks in the plenary meetings, Working Group meetings and informal consultations.
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> "In particular, I am pleased that in Working Group I, delegations were engaged in in-depth discussions on many critical issues with regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Although there persist significantly divergent views, the deliberations shed light on common ground and helped delegations better understand their positions. Working Group II also held constructive discussions on recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons. Member States have made tangible progress by narrowing their differences of view on some of the key issues. I am convinced that both Working Groups have taken forward their deliberations on the respective agenda items and laid the groundwork for making further progress next year.
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> "We also held very useful consultations and discussions on a third agenda item. It is my intention to continue my consultations on this matter during the intersessional period.
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> "I take this opportunity to congratulate and express my sincerest appreciation to the Chairs of the Working Groups, Ambassador Kairat Abdrakhmanov of Kazakhstan and Mr. Bouchaib Eloumni of Morocco. I also wish to express appreciation to Ambassador Barlybay Sadykov of Kazakhstan, who ably assisted Ambassador Abdrakhmanov in steering the deliberations of

Working Group I. Their tasks were not easy, but I believe they truly rose to the challenge".

Concluding statements

The Acting Chair: As there is no request for the floor from delegations, I give the floor to Mr. Thomas Markram to deliver remarks on behalf of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Kim Won-soo.

Mr. Markram: I would like to read out the following remarks on behalf of the High Representative, Mr. Kim Won-soo.

"At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Odo Tevi and the members of the Bureau on the conclusion of the 2016 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I would like to commend Ambassador Tevi on the excellent manner in which he steered the deliberations. I commend the Chair's dedication, especially in the light of the many conflicting demands on his time over the past several days, including the special session of the General Assembly on drugs and the high-level signature ceremony for the Paris Climate Change Agreement. He demonstrated firm commitment to the Commission from the time of his election as Chair in January. I wish to thank him for his sincere and earnest efforts.

"As the Chair noted during his opening remarks (see A/CN.10/PV.354), the environment in which the Commission conducts its work is filled with challenges. Nevertheless, the positive and constructive engagement of member States has proven that even amid considerable threats posed to international peace and security, progress can be made. The second year of the Disarmament Commission's cycle is arguably the most difficult. Many of the most crucial deliberations occur at that time. States seek a narrowing down of views, bearing in mind the diminishing hours left in which to secure consensus.

"In that regard, I wish to applaud the efforts of all delegations for working with such passion and commitment during this challenging year. I believe that the past three weeks can be counted as a success insofar as the stage is set for further meaningful discussions during the intersessional period and for the last substantive session of this cycle next year. In particular, I would like to thank delegations for their active and constructive engagement during the informal plenary meeting held yesterday on the inclusion of a possible third agenda item. I listened carefully to the views of all delegations. I take this opportunity to assure delegations of the full support of the Secretariat moving forward. We in the Secretariat fully respect the prerogative of member States to take the final decision and will do our best to support whatever decision is made by member States.

"In that regard, the Secretariat stands ready to provide support to the Chairs of Working Groups I and II during the intersessional period in their consultations with a view to achieving concrete progress, which remains a priority. The Secretariat also stands ready to support the Chair of the Commission in his consultations, as reflected in paragraph 12 of the report that has just been adopted. If these consultations lead to favourable consideration of the inclusion of a third agenda item during the next session, the Secretariat will find additional resources from existing resources to meet any demand for additional time or meetings so as to ensure that there will be no impact on resources for Working Groups II and II.

"At a time when the disarmament machinery is so often criticized as stagnated and unproductive, I wish to strike a positive tone and underscore that the dedication and passion of representatives should not go underappreciated. It is when this dedication and passion are translated into productivity that the machinery can truly achieve the results that we all desire".

The Acting Chair: Before I bring this meeting and the session to an end, allow me to express my gratitude to all delegations for their constructive spirit and the support extended to me and other members of the Bureau, who have helped me shoulder the responsibility of running the Commission smoothly. To them I am particularly thankful.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the secretariat of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, as well as staff members of the Department of General Assembly and Conference Management, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the interpreters, the conference room officers, the documents officers and the sound engineers.

Closure of the session

The Acting Chair: I declare closed the 2016 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.